

# KING DAVID AND HIS PSALMS



Psalm 3



Psalm 18



Psalm 23



Psalm 27



Psalm 29



Psalm 30



Psalm 108



Psalm 138



Psalm 145



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The background of the page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of a Hebrew manuscript. The text is written in dark ink on aged, yellowish paper. The script is a traditional Hebrew cursive. A white rectangular box with a thin black border is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page, containing the title and the main text of the preface.

## PREFACE

TODAY'S CURRENT events have shaken us to the core. First came the COVID pandemic. Our world changed overnight. Lockdowns and social distancing became routine. The workplace became time at home for another Zoom meeting, while school became time at home for another Zoom session for our children. We longed for direct contact with others. Some friends and relatives became infected and very sick from COVID. Some even died from it.

We felt frustrated and powerless. Even the simplest activities of daily living, like going to the grocery store, had to be carefully choreographed. Our fondest hope was just to have our normal lives back again.

Just as we thought we were reclaiming some post-pandemic normalcy, we suddenly faced unprecedented spikes in inflation. It was the

highest inflation rate in 40 years. To make matters worse, we got hit with supply chain problems, which resulted in extended delays for consumer goods that used to be delivered in just days.

Then came the invasion of Ukraine, which was the largest European land war since World War II. We saw death, destruction, and suffering on a scale we could scarcely imagine.

Suddenly, the scariest part of the day became the time we spent watching the nightly news on TV.

These events have forced us to deal with a new normal in our lives. The world has been permanently changed. Our old ways of doing things have quickly become obsolete. Other than hearing that “we are all in this together,” we received little guidance about how we should approach these dramatic life changes.

With so much misery, death, and destruction seen on a daily basis, many of us desperately seek the guidance to confront these unprecedented challenges. But where can we find this guidance?



I believe the guidance for today can be found in the story of someone who lived thousands of years ago. The life lessons and Psalms of King David have real meaning as we struggle to deal with today's unprecedented challenges.

David is venerated in the three great Abrahamic religions of the world. In Judaism, David is known as the King of Israel. In Christianity, Jesus is described as having descended from him. In Islam, David is described as a major prophet. David's 75 Psalms soar with inspiration, emotion, and reverence. They are a cornerstone of the liturgy of not only Judaism, but also of Christianity and Islam.

David has inspired many works of Jewish and Christian art. Many famous painters painted David through the centuries. For instance, one of Titian's most famous works is his painting of David in battle against Goliath. In early Hebrew manuscripts, we see David wearing a crown and playing the lyre. In ancient manuscripts from Byzantine times, we learn that David was an ancestor of Jesus. One of the most famous artistic depictions of David is the David sculpture



by Michelangelo. Created between 1501 and 1504, this sculpture is considered a masterpiece of Renaissance sculpture. It is a marble statue of David and stands majestically at 17 feet. The sculpture is a favored subject by art patrons who visit Florence, Italy.

David's life is full of contradictions. It contains many inspiring stories that soar and represent the best of humanity, and yet there are some stories that show humanity's dark side. Both are helpful in giving us guidance today.

I began my own journey to learn about King David by reading the Davidic Psalms. I then chose my nine favorite Psalms of David and painted a 6" by 9" watercolor representing an important theme for each of these nine Psalms. Originally, this book was to be limited to a discussion of just these nine Davidic Psalms. But as I read more about King David, I felt I had to do more. Although the Psalms are awe-inspiring, I felt that there was even more to the story of King David than just his Psalms. I began looking closely at the stories of his life to see what guidance they can provide us today.



I start the book by talking about the Twelve Tribes of Israel, which is helpful in explaining David's background. In Chapter 2, I give a short history of King David as told in the Tanakh, the Jewish version of the Bible.

I found many stories of strength of courage in David's life that we can apply to today. In Chapter 3, I discuss some of the more significant stories about David's acts of courage.

In Chapter 4, I discuss King David and Christianity. Special thanks to Pastor Daniel Nelms of Wilmington, DE, who helped guide me in writing this chapter. In Chapter 5, I write about King David and Islam. Special thanks to Imam Arqum Rashid of Wilmington, DE for his assistance in writing this chapter. In Chapter 6, I write about King David and Judaism. Special thanks go to Rabbi Steven Saks for his help and guidance in writing this chapter. In addition to speaking to these leaders of the three Abrahamic religions, I reviewed several Christian, Islam, and Jewish texts to learn about each religion's perspective on King David.

In Chapter 7, I write about King David and



leadership. Here, I used some of the topics discussed in Richard D. Phillips' 1999 book entitled *The Heart of an Executive*. The author states that David's story is one of a supreme career executive. He suggests that today's executives can learn many important lessons from the trials and triumphs of David.

Before I wrote Chapter 8 on King David and Archeology, I read numerous articles describing several recent archeological findings about King David. These articles include an excellent one by Ruth Margalit entitled "In Search of King David's Lost Empire", published in the June 22, 2020 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine. I also reviewed several articles on this topic published in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. Through these sources I learned about a bitter debate among archeologists on whether King David actually existed. In Chapter 8, I discuss this debate, as well as some exciting new archeological discoveries about King David.

In Chapter 9, I delve into nine of David's most poetic and meaningful Psalms. First, each Psalm is recounted in its entirety. Then, I discuss the



essence of these nine Psalms. Finally, I use my original watercolors to help convey the inspirational message of each Psalm.

In Chapter 10, I discuss how David's story is relevant to us today. David demonstrated several important precepts which we can apply in our current struggles in order to live a more meaningful life. These precepts include perseverance, courage, humility, truthfulness, equanimity, gratitude, responsibility, and order.

Some of my research about King David is derived from the Jewish books of the Tanakh, including I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, and I Chronicles. *The Encyclopedia Judaica* (1972 edition) and the Jewish Virtual Library were invaluable resources.

Let us begin our journey together as we learn more about King David and his Psalms. My hope is that we will gain courage and inspiration from these stories.









## CHAPTER TWO

### *A Short History of King David and His Reign*

DAVID WAS THE eighth child and youngest son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah, one of The Twelve Tribes of ancient Israel. He was the great grandson of Ruth, a great matriarch in Judaism.

For much of his early life, David was a simple shepherd who had no great ambitions. This changed when the prophet Samuel said that he would be the next King of Israel.

King Saul, who was the first king of Israel, had several early dealings with David. He heard that David was a great musician. He asked David to play for him and Saul enjoyed it. When David was only a shepherd, he defeated the Philistine giant Goliath with just a stick and a few stones. We'll learn more about the David and Goliath story in Chapter 3.

Eric  
Doroshov



David supported the reign of King Saul, who gave David a high rank in his army. He was well liked by his troops and the officers in Saul's army. At first, King Saul liked David, and even permitted David to marry one of his daughters, Michal.

However, as time went along, King Saul became jealous of David, and attempted to have him assassinated.

Saul enlisted his son Jonathan to kill David. However, unbeknownst to Saul, David was friends with Jonathan, who helped David. On one occasion, Jonathan was able to temporarily reverse his father's death decree and convince Saul not to murder David. However, Saul's jealousy continued to overwhelm him, and Saul attempted to kill David a second time. This time, David was tipped off about Saul's intentions from Jonathan and escaped. He eventually found refuge with the King of Moab.

During his flight from Saul, David gained the support of 600 men as he traveled from city to city. At one point, David discovered Saul in a cave and crept up on him. However, instead of



killing Saul, he cut a piece of fabric from his coat. David spared his life because he would not go against the dictates of G-d, who had anointed Saul to be King. Despite all of Saul's misdeeds, David considered Saul's life precious and of great value. Although Saul was initially appreciative of David's actions in sparing his life, he continued his pursuit of David.

While trying to avoid capture by Saul, David joined the Philistine King Achish of Gath, who appointed him a general in his army. David raided the cities of nomads who harassed the Jews and gave the spoils to the leaders of the tribe of Judah. The people of Judea were grateful to David and eventually appointed him King of that tribe.

David began a new stage in his life as the King of Judah reigning in Hebron. By that time, Saul and Jonathan had died in a war against the Philistines. Saul's son Ish-Bosheth became the King of Israel. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel fought, with David growing stronger and Saul's son's forces growing weaker.

Eventually, David defeated Saul's son and



Ish-Bosheth was killed. The tribes of Israel were then left without a leader.

They anointed David as their King. He was now the King of both Judah and the remaining eleven tribes. His most important job was to convert the loose confederation of the Twelve Tribes of Israel into one unified political body, and thus he united all Twelve Tribes under his one rule. He was 30 years old at the time. He reigned from 1010-970 BCE, and his reign is often looked on as a golden era.

David's first action while King of the unified Tribes was to capture what is now the City of David in Jerusalem. He fortified it and made it his capital city. He intended the city to be the secular and religious center of all the Tribes of Israel and brought the Holy Ark to that city.

Although David was not permitted to build the first Temple, he prepared for its construction by setting aside materials and giving the building plans to Solomon.

During his reign, David began fighting mostly defensive wars against Israel's neighbors. During these wars, he annexed some land outright.



He also established protectorates over some conquered lands. His successes were achieved both by military power and diplomatic talent. He also took economic considerations into his actions.

Not all the members of the tribes supported the hegemony established by David. For instance, there was agitation from the Tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim against the rule of the House of David.

David's empire extended on both sides of the Jordan River, as far as the Mediterranean Sea. From the capital of Jerusalem, David enforced justice in his empire by establishing professional civil and military administrators. He established twelve administrative districts which were derived from The Twelve Tribes.

David established a strong army, and financed the civil, military, and religious administration of the State based on tribute and taxes collected by district offices. As a result, he was able to take a group of loosely knit tribes and mold them into a national union.

David administered "true justice among all his



people” 2 Samuel 8:15. He treated his subjects fairly and with compassion.

Despite all these accomplishments, David had many challenges and problems during his reign. One famous incident which showed David’s dark side occurred while one of his generals, Uriah, was away serving in David’s army. David saw the general’s wife, Bathsheba, bathing, and became infatuated with her. David then connived a way to have Uriah killed so he could have Bathsheba for himself. He ordered Uriah’s comrades to abandon him during the battle, thus easing the way for Uriah to be killed by an opposing army. Following Uriah’s death, David took Bathsheba as his wife. When confronted by Nathan the prophet, David saw the evil of his ways, and was wholehearted in his remorse.

G-d severely punished David for his misdeeds. The first child he had with Bathsheba died; however, Bathsheba and David did conceive a second son, Solomon, and he would become David’s eventual successor as King. As additional retribution for his misdeeds, David was cursed with the promise of a rebellion from within his own



house. As a result, David's family was a cause of personal strife throughout his life.

Examples of this family strife include an incident in which his son Amnon raped Tamar, Amnon's half-sister. Another son, Absalom, killed Amnon. He then led a rebellion against David. David fled Jerusalem and reorganized a counterattack, killing 20,000 of Absalom's Israelite soldiers and Absalom himself. After that, David returned to power.

Another revolt broke out against David's rule when Sheba, from the Tribe of Benjamin, tried to take over power. With the help of loyal subordinates, David succeeded in also defeating that rebellion.

David was able to stop these rebellions and prevent fragmentation of the tribes through the force of his personality, his courage, and his talent of resolving problems with his opponents.

As David grew older, the issue of succession to the throne required resolution. David's oldest son, Adonijah, declared himself King, but David had promised Bathsheba that her son, Solomon, would be king. He publicly anointed



Solomon as his successor. David died after 40 years as king.

Solomon was David's tenth son and the second son of Bathsheba. He became the third and last king of a United Kingdom of Israel. He built the Temple to house the Ark of the Covenant per the wishes of King David and G-d. Solomon was renowned for his wisdom, his writings, and his building accomplishments. Soon after he died, there was a civil war among the Tribes. This was the end of the United Kingdom of Israel that David had worked so hard to establish.

Many Rabbis believe that David wrote, or at least edited, the Book of Psalms. As we shall see, the Davidic Psalms are filled with lessons, inspiration, and courage, even for us today.

In addition to all his accomplishments, David was a skillful musician and a great poet. The authors of *The Encyclopedia Judaica* summarize the life of David by writing that he was a real character, with all aspects depicted. "At times his strengths were manifested, and at times his weaknesses. As King of all the tribes of Israel and ruler of a great and extensive kingdom, he



is revealed as a superb politician, commander in chief, and organizer.”

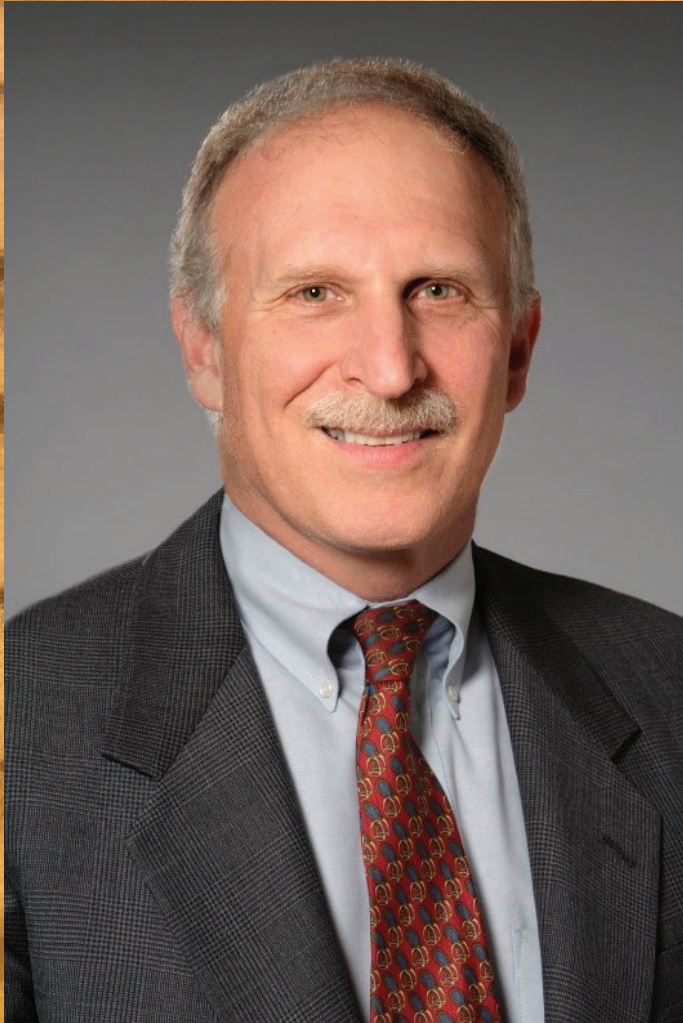


## CONCLUSION

WE HAVE COME TO THE END of our discussion about David. As we have seen, the ancient story of David and his Psalms is relevant to us today in many ways. I hope that the paintings, along with the information in the book, gives you courage and inspiration to prosper in these troubled times.

*ERIC M. DOROSHOW*







### *About the Author & Artist*

Eric M. Doroshow is an attorney, artist, author, and life coach.

In his legal career, he is one of the founding partners of the Delaware law firm of Doroshow, Pasquale, Krawitz and Bhaya. He is a Past President of the Delaware Trial Lawyers Association. He is also a certified Arbitrator and Mediator in the Delaware Courts.

In his artistic career, he has been painting water-colors for several years. Although he has no formal artistic training, he has taken numerous classes and workshops with well-known Delaware artists.

In his career as an author, he has written and published two other books. His first book is entitled *The Twelve Tribes of Israel: An Artistic and Historical Journey*. That book is illustrated with 12 of his original watercolors, representing each one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. His second book is entitled *The Delaware Auto Accident Book: Avoid the Mistakes That Can Wreck Your Injury Case*.

In his career as a life coach, he received a Master Certified Life Coach certification. He works with young professionals and entrepreneurs to help them achieve their personal and professional dreams and aspirations.

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